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NSC BRIEFING

5 February 1958

WORLD REACTION TO US SATELLITE LAUNCHING

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- I. USSR: Soviet propaganda media promptly reported the successful launching of the US "Explorer" but comment has been light and the subject has been deemphasized in newscasts.
  - A. Mikoyan made the first comment by a member of the Soviet hierarchy on the subject while attending a Ceylonese embassy reception. While noting he was "pleased" by the American achievement, he chided that "of course we waited some time for this event to take place. But it finally happened. That is good. It's peaceful competition, you know." Mikoyan also made it clear that Russia will send up "several more" Sputniks.
  - B. Soviet comment in general stresses the continued Soviet lead in rocketry, seeks to give the impression of graciously welcoming the US achievement, and congratulates the US scientists in a patronizing manner.
  - C. At least two Russian scientists quickly announced that Sputnik III would be launched "in the very near future." 25X1X6  
[REDACTED] official in Washington added that this launching "may be in March or may be in April."
  - D. The Russians also cabled the IGY headquarters in Brussels--within four hours after the American launching--that they were airmailing data from their Sputniks for the use of world scientists. (IGY Secretary General Nicolet has since reported that the Soviet reports contained "nothing new" and no numerical data.)

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II. Eastern Europe: With the exception of Poland, Eastern European propaganda generally stresses that the Explorer was launched four months after the first Sputnik, that it is technically inferior to the Soviet <sup>sputniks</sup> satellites, and that it was designed by a former Nazi.

A. The Polish press had some words of high praise for the American achievement.

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1. A Polish homeservice press broadcast stated: "The Americans deserve full credit for having managed to convert a military missile into a satellite rocket within a few months. May all the military missiles in all countries be converted in the same manner."

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2. Another Polish newscast said: "If the launching of the Alpha, the more perfect equipment of the rocket, and the use of a new fuel be connected with the functioning of the Zeta apparatus, its political significance can be felt at once." ... This proves that "a great deal has been done in the West to advance the science and technology of launching artificial satellite, where not so long ago the Soviet Union was far ahead.... In this light, it seems that the Western radio suggestions are quite right in saying that the launching of the Alpha may facilitate conferences of representatives of East and West."

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3. According to AP, one Polish scientist is reported to have said "This is a far more important thing (scientifically) than the other one up there--a useless piece of metal with a dead dog in it." A leading Polish space expert,

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Prof. Gadomski, added: "The weight of Sputnik is not so important to scientists as the information it gives."

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The fact the new satellite can continue broadcasting for three months...and relay signals when it meets meteors, testifies to the high technique of its instruments."

4. The Polish radio quoted Premier Cyrankiewicz as hailing the launching as a "fine scientific achievement."

B. The Yugoslavs Party newspaper Borba commented that the momentary military superiority of either camp is not important, and that the real significance of the satellites is that they prove the necessity of negotiations.

III. Communist China: Peking's propaganda reaction has been the most caustic so far. People's Daily called the Explorer satellite launched by "relatively backward" American rocketeers a far cry from the Soviet Sputniks. It was launched by the Jupiter-C missile which it described as "only a medium range rocket" unlike the Soviet ICBM.

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IV. Asia-Africa: Response to the launching, except for scattered news reports based on major international wire services, so far has been both limited and delayed. Comment to date has generally expressed satisfaction and the hope that the scientific advances will help lead to lessening of international tensions.

A. All major Japanese papers covered the story prominently. They admitted the smaller size of Explorer but praised its quality and predicting<sup>ed</sup> that the US will overtake of the Russians.

B. In Southeast Asia only Indonesia has thus far responded officially. Foreign Minister Subandrio congratulated the US and hoped that both America and Russia will use their

scientific knowledge for humanitarian purposes

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- C. The Pakistani nationalist paper, Dawn, though noting the smaller size of the Explorer, declared that its launching gives the free world "cause to heave a sigh of relief."
- D. In both Syria and Egypt the Explorer launching has taken second place to the proclamation of a United Arab Republic. In both countries, though the American success was noted, emphasis was placed on invidious comparisons with the Russian satellites.
- V. Western Europe: "Relief and satisfaction" sum up public and official reaction to the successful launching of the US Explorer in Western Europe.
- A. The UK, France, and West Germany, both officially and in the press, stressed the US achievement in the perspective of its probable influence on summit talks.
- VI. Latin America: Latin American ambassadors' and press comment praised US scientific accomplishment and decision to share the Explorer findings with all countries for the benefit of science and mankind.